

## LFC SUPPORTERS' COMMITTEE MEETING #20 7 MAY 201

These minutes were produced from an audio recording provided by LFC 1 of 9

### MINUTES OF THE 20TH MEETING BETWEEN THE SUPPORTERS' COMMITTEE AND LIVERPOOL FOOTBALL CLUB ON 7 MAY 2016 AT ANFIELD.

Representing the LFC Supporters' Committee: Bella Ainsworth (BA), Supporters Under 25; Paul Amann (PA), LGBT Supporters; Anna Burgess (AB), Away Fans; Ian Byrne (IB), Family Match Goers; Tony Fitzgerald (AF), Season Ticket Holders and Hospitality; Karen Gill (KG), Honorary President; Yunus Lunat (YL), BAME Supporters; Matthew Selby (MS), International Fans; Graham Smith (GS), Supporters in the Merseyside Area. Representing Liverpool Football Club: Ian Ayre (IA), Chief Executive; Susan Black (SB) Communications Director; Phil Dutton (PD), Head of Ticketing and Hospitality; Rachael Newman (RN), Customer Experience Assistant; Andrew Parkinson (AP), Operations Director; Scott Richardson (SR), Head of CRM. Facilitator: William Montgomery (WM).

#### 1. Welcome and introductions:

1.1. WM opened welcomed all present, all of whom were known to each other. He advised that the meeting was officially number 20, on account of number 19 on 27 February being postponed and replaced by a meeting covering diversity and equality on 12 April, the minutes from which have since been made available.

1.2. GS confirmed that since the last meeting, the Committee had lost a couple of its members. Tara Fisher (TF), the representative for Female Supporters, had unfortunately needed to resign her position, and Roy Heaney (RH), the representative for Non Season Ticket Holders & Official Members, who has been in poor health for some time, has also needed to resign. There are therefore two positions vacant, but it is the Committees view that it would be prudent to wait for the outcome of the impending review of fan engagement that the Club has recently initiated before inviting nominations for the vacant positions.

1.3. GS continued by saying that in the interim, Bella Ainsworth (BA), who represents supporters Under 25, would cover for female supporters as well and that Tony Fitzgerald (AF), who represents season ticket holders and hospitality, would cover non-season ticket holders and official members.

1.4. GS continued by saying that Lee Foley (LF), who represents official supporters' clubs, had suffered the loss of a close family member, and could not attend the meeting. On behalf of the Committee, and all present, GS offered his condolences and said that he was in the thoughts of the Committee during this difficult time.

#### 2. Matters arising from the previous meeting:

2.1. GS confirmed that the minutes from the last "full" meeting of between the Committee and the Club on 28 November were a true reflection of what was discussed and agreed, and that no matters had since arisen.

#### 3. Q&A covering fan engagement:

3.1. GS confirmed that a number of questions had been submitted to the Club prior to the meeting for consideration. A number of additional questions had been identified during the pre-meeting, and that a total of 21 questions were being tabled today.

3.2. Q1 from AF: Can the Club confirm that it was happy with the way the season ticket moves were carried out?

3.3. PD replied by saying that overall the Club feels the seat allocations have gone well, with only a small number of complaints being received. In an ideal world, the Club would have liked to communicate the rationale several months ago, but was unable to do so. That said, with only a few weeks notice for many fans, the process has been well received. The small number of complaints that have been received have either been resolved or are being dealt with.

3.4. GS said that it was important to recognise that hard work that has been done by the Club in making the transition from the old stand to the new one appear seamless, which has been reflected in only a small number of complaints being received from the thousands of fans who have been affected by the redevelopment of the Main Stand and resultant seat re-allocations. The Committee also wanted to recognise the work of AF who had provided constant feedback to the Club on matters being raised by the fans the Committee represents.

3.5. Q2 from AF: Can the Club please confirm the exact breakdown of ticket allocations in the Main Stand following the seat move process between hospitality/STHs/Members and the Stand will be open for the end of August 2016.

3.6. AP responded by saying that the new Main Stand will be open by the end of August 2016. Up to this date, there will be a good number of test events to ensure that everything runs smoothly.

3.7. IA continued by saying that everything from the fans perspective will be finished, but the undercroft of the existing stand will be developed during the summer months. Consequently, the Club will install a temporary facility incorporating changing rooms, referees facility, media rooms, and temporary adjoining players tunnel. The completion of these facilities will not conclude until January 2017.

3.8. PD said with regard to a full breakdown of ticket allocations, this can't be provided until the Club has completed its work on the season ticket waiting list, and the additional 2,000 seats that the new Main Stand can accommodate. PD said that the breakdown would be provided once all the allocations had been made, which will probably be the end of May 2016.

3.9. Q3 from AF: Can the Club confirm the breakdown of ticket allocations for all other stands for the 2016/17 season?

3.10. See 3.16 above.

3.11. Q4 from AF: Can the Club confirm that the membership scheme will operate the same way for 2016/17 with regards to the sales of tickets and what the cut-off point will be for home games from 2015/16 to enable "old" category A purchases [i.e. is it still 14]?

3.12. PD responded by saying that he couldn't give the 'cut off point' as the information will not be known until two or three weeks prior to the members sale, depending on how many members renew, but it will be lower than 14.

3.13. Q5 from AF: Given the increased amount of sponsors/hospitality for 2016/17 can the Club issue a transparent statement on the maximum number of priority ticket that will be taken from any general Club allocation issued by the FA/UEFA in future prior to the start of any cup competition ticket sales (including the auto cup scheme)?

3.14. PD responded by saying that the way the Club is organising hospitality for the coming season, all members will not be guaranteed a cup final ticket, as it depends on the allocation. The Club is against circulating arbitrary figures in case the allocations change from what has been communicated to fans. For example, the Club was expecting to be allocated 8,500 tickets for the Europa League Final, but has, in fact, been allocated 10,000. Club will be pleased to issue a communiqué in order to manage fans' expectations.

3.15. Q6 from GS: Why hasn't the senior person season ticket discount been amended from 1 August 2016 cut-off as discussed?

3.16. PD responded by saying the from a system perspective there is no problem in implementing such a change. But there is a dilemma here, what should be the policy if a fan reaches the age 18 or 22 during the season, should his/her season ticket be increased similarly to reflect the higher price band?

3.17. PD said that the Club has about 6,000 fans in the 65+-age category, but less than half actually take advantage of the age related discount. This is probably on account of them passing their season ticket on to a friend or family member.

3.18. PF continued by saying that the Club needs to consider whether it wants to have a split policy of reducing prices for the 65+ fans, but not increasing prices when younger fans turn either 18 or 22. The Club will take this matter away for consideration and will report back to the Committee once it has calculated the likely affect on its budget.

3.19. Q7 from AB: Does the Club think it is fair that a member attending all 19 Premier League home games during 2015/16 should pay around £1,030 (which coincidentally is what a MS season ticket holder was going to pay to be on the halfway line prior to the walkout) plus £35.99 membership subscription in comparison to £869 if they were a season ticket holder?

3.20. PD said that he was confused as to the point of the question and wondered if the Committee were seeking alignment between match day and season ticket prices, as every Club in the Premier League charges different prices for match day tickets and season tickets.

3.21. There followed a short debate with several contributors trying to clarify the point of the question, before AF said that it was more about the "status" attributed to the fan who attends all 19 games in a season, and how he/she contributes more financially, but has less access to away tickets and cup competition tickets compared to a season ticket holder.

3.22. SR said that if the aim was to make the member who attends all 19 home games feel recognised and rewarded for their level of commitment, the Club will take this away for consideration as part of the membership scheme review and report back to the Committee with some options for consideration.

3.23. Q8 from MS: There is an action log of all the issues raised between the Committee and the Club. There are many items that have stagnated for a long time, even years. Can the Club make a concerted effort to work on all open points and aim to get as many as possible closed by the next meeting?

3.24. GS added that the 'document' was to become more crucial to the Committee and would be circulated every two weeks which might, in turn, put some pressure on the Club officials to resolve the agreed actions and move matters forward. The Committee would also like the "action log" to form part of the minutes so the fans can see what has been achieved and what remains outstanding.

3.25. WM said that he had previously provided the Club with a list of the 10 most popular online tracking tools for recording, monitoring and updating action points, and that it might be opportune to move away from a reliance on MS Excel and to a cloud-based system prior to the new season. It was agreed that this was a good idea, and that the most appropriate system should be identified and any outstanding actions migrated in advance of the next meeting.

3.26. Q9 from MS: In between the joint meetings, there are often smaller meetings with members of the Committee from which there is very rarely any apparent follow up. An example was the excellent presentation by SR and his team regarding the match-day experience during which ideas were put forward but nothing has been reported back as to what is planned for fans.

3.27. SR apologised for the ideas and actions being lost in circulation which will shortly be passed to GS for distribution to the wider Committee. On the list, there are numerous ideas relating to the research programme which are being considered and taken forward as appropriate. When the Club conducts the next match day survey, the ideas and suggestions previously submitted will be included. The Club agreed to circulate minutes, and actions, from any future ad hoc meetings with representatives of the Committee as soon as administratively possible thereafter. It was also agreed that the presentation referred to in 3.26 above would be circulated to the Committee.

3.28. Q10 from BA: A meeting took place to look at young supporter engagement and some ideas for grassroots initiatives were followed up. A local school was invited to watch an away game on a large TV and refreshments were provided. This was a great success with positive feedback. Why hasn't it been repeated with a different school?

3.29. SB responded by saying that the Club agreed to conduct a pilot of screening of an away game, which resulted in 32 children attending to "experience" the game against Norwich City. The school submitted a report, which included feedback from the children themselves, highlighting the many benefits the experience offered. The Club has included provision in the coming budget to repeat the event with more children from schools in Anfield and Breckfield, and will be approaching the Head Teachers shortly. SB agreed to circulate the report to the Committee.

3.30. SB continued by saying that the other initiative involving children is the Sweeper Zone where they are engaged in collecting litter during home games. It has been decided to get the children

engaged in more significant activities, such as accompanying members of the Fan Liaison Team to help develop their social skills. As a thank you, each child receives a match ticket.

3.31. IB asked if there was any update on getting children on the pitch to play football during half time. A discussion took place on getting sponsors, who have certain rights during the interval as part of their sponsorship package, involved so the activities are more engaging to local fans, and children in particular. GS said that some of the current activities are “silly” and do not fit with the culture of the Club. MS referred to the very successful Hyundai initiative in Australia that has financial benefits to the Club and is well received by local children.

3.32. IA said that he would bring the matter up at the annual conference between the Club and its sponsors in June and present a proposal that the fans, via the supporters’ committee, have suggested changes to the half-time activities. With all the sponsors in attendance, there is a greater chance of getting collective support, rather than approaching each sponsor separately. He said that there could be an opportunity for one or two of the Committee to attend the conference and pitch the idea personally.

3.33. Q11 from KP: Will the Club work with the Supporters’ Committee and the Liverpool Disabled Supporters’ Association [LDSA] to finalise a better process for the purchase of disabled tickets for all away games, both domestically and in Europe?

3.34. GS added that disabled people have different challenges from able-bodied people when it comes to organising their transport. There is a perception that they are the same as every other fan, and we need more attention given to this matter. Once we know the number of disabled fans to be allocated, it should be communicated so those in contention for a ticket can arrange their travel plans early.

3.35. PD responded by saying that the Club is happy to share such information as soon as it is known with the proviso that the number of disabled fans can change, often at short notice. When it comes to European games, the same reporting standards are not employed; so obtaining such information is not without difficulty. Once the Club knows its opponents, the dialogue commences immediately, but information often proves difficult to obtain. The smaller the Club, and the newer they are to European football, the more difficult it becomes.

3.36. IA said that he would raise the matter of improving information sharing on stadium facilities, particularly those for disabled fans, for European fixtures at the next Premier League Shareholders’ Meeting, but we should also consider getting the LDSA to write a formal letter to either Uefa or the Premier League spelling out its concerns.

3.37. Q12 from GS: In light of recent developments can the Club confirm that it continues to intend to abide by the Taylor Report into ground safety?

3.38. AP responded by saying that the Taylor Report featured some 70 recommendations, the major two being perimeter fencing and all-seater stadiums for Premier League and Championship clubs. The Club has complied with all the recommendations within the report. There have been calls for safe standing areas, but as the government hasn’t produced legislation on the matter, the Club has no plans to make any changes.

3.39. GS continued by saying the Taylor Report made a recommendation that the introduction of all-seater stadiums should not coincide with the price of tickets going out of reach of fans. The Committee feels that this part of the Taylor Report should also be implemented.

3.40. Q13 from IB: Can the Club introduce a 'sensory room' similar to the one that has been introduced by Sunderland at the Stadium of Light?

3.41. AP responded by saying that the Club is exploring the possibility of using Box 1A for this purpose, which is often used as a second TV studio. Whilst the Club will not be in a position of permanently convert the space into a sensory room, it could be used on an ad hoc basis for this purpose.

3.42. IB said that the Committee is in support of creating a sensory room facility on account of the number of fans who would like to enjoy live football, but are unable to do so because of their special circumstances.

3.43. Q14 from AF: The Committee has received a good number of emails concerning hospitality in the Centenary Stand, particularly payment terms and length of commitment. Can the Club explain why they received short notice of the change, and the thinking behind it?

3.44. PD responded by saying that the Club had been talking to hospitality members of the Centenary Stand for a couple of months. The process around the contracts has been well communicated on a one-to-one basis over the last couple of months. The Club wishes to re-align all contracts so consistency is achieved. There are break clauses in the individual contracts, but not for business contracts.

3.45. PD continued by saying that any specific queries or concerns could be passed to him and the Club would deal with them on an individual basis.

3.46. Q15 from YL: The Committee has received questions from supporters asking if halal food was being prepared correctly, with concerns being expressed about a lack of awareness that halal (and kosher) food should not be served in the same tray as non-halal meat, and that separate carving knives and serving spoons should be offered. YL had been made aware of occasions in the hospitality areas where halal food was served in the same tray as pork and supporters expected to use the same cutlery to serve halal and non-halal meat. YL was also notified of canteen staff unable to confirm if deserts were suitable for vegetarians [i.e. the use of gelatine]?

3.47. AP responded by saying the Club meets all requirements where Halal and vegetarian food preparation and display is concerned, but would confirm with the Committee the exact processes involved.

3.48. GS asked if someone from the catering department could attend the next premeeting of the Committee to educate and inform on the food preparation and serving techniques employed by the Club. The Club agreed to send a representative.

3.49. Q16 from KP: Enquired about the status of the idea previously tabled about a group of fans with varying disabilities taking part in a televised discussion to share how the match-day experience works from their perspective. It would be good if the Club adopted this idea.

3.50. SB responded by saying that she would consult with Julie Harris, the Head of HR and the member of staff responsible, to move this idea forward and making it happen.

3.51. Q17 from AB: What representations is the Club making to UEFA regarding the availability of tickets for the Europa League Final against Sevilla FC?

3.52. IA responded by saying that he recently spoke with Giorgio Marchetti, UEFA director of competitions, who made the point that in the past, before the

Europa League had a Champions League place for the winner, bigger clubs didn't take the competition seriously, and for that reason smaller capacity venues were sought, which has worked. With such a big price on offer, it is likely that UEFA will seek larger capacity venues for future competitions to accommodate the teams with bigger followings appearing in the final.

3.53. There was a short debate on the allocation of the 10,000 tickets and how these would be distributed. PD confirmed that only around 220 of the 10,000 tickets for the final would be distributed among sponsor and partners, with the remainder going to general admission, hospitality members and priority rights members. Where the distribution of tickets exceeds 24,000, every hospitality member is guaranteed a ticket, in the case of the Europa League Final; hospitality members will be subject to a ballot to determine who qualifies.

3.54. Q18 from IB: In light of recent show of support by young fans outside the King Harry public house on the Anfield Road prior to Europa League semi-final fixture, could we re-open the debate about a Boys' Pen?

3.55. IA responded by saying the issue would be a] safeguarding the young fans and b] having 1,000 or so tickets in one area of the stadium. PD said that the matter was discussed at the Ticketing Working Group and no resolution was achieved. AP said that the Club had reviewed this before following a request from the Committee, and it was not feasible at the time, and that position has not changed. AP said that the Club would look at the matter and determine what, if anything, can be achieved.

3.56. IA reminded those present that the use of pyrotechnics both inside and outside the ground is banned. The Club had been charge five times this season by Uefa for being in breach of the rules and that it's only a matter of time before Uefa takes more punitive action. He said that it was up to all fans to remain vigilant and not condone such practices.

3.57. In response to a questions from SB, GS said that it was incumbent on the Club to not only publish what fines are being imposed by UEFA, but also what potential restrictions might be imposed on the fans themselves. Only by letting fans know how they will be disadvantage can the practice of throwing pyros be eliminated.

3.58. Q19 from PA: The Club's support for Liverpool Pride over the years has been welcomed. In the run-up to Pride from the 21 to 23 of July, iconic buildings are invited to illuminate using rainbow colours. Can the Club do the same...?

3.59. IA said the most iconic view of Anfield would be The Kop, and the Club would look at the feasibility of taking part as requested. He also asked if the Club would advertise in the brochure

along with providing raffle prizes for general fund raising activities. Additionally, he also asked if the Club would approach Glenn Hysen and his son Anton to participate in the march. SB asked if all requests could be forwarded to the Club for consideration. PD agreed to do so.

3.60. Q20 from MS: When the Club produces photographs featuring fans, could these photographs be made available to the fans themselves for personal use?

3.61. IA responded by saying that several years ago, the Club managed its own image portfolio, but this is now managed on the Club's behalf by Getty Images. Providing the request was made direct to the Club and the image was not to be used for commercial or business use, the Club would be content to provide any such images on an individual basis upon request.

3.62. Q21 from MS: Is it a concern for the Club that the recent sale of media rights to Optus (in Australia) will preclude genuine fans from watching televised football, as not all will have access to Optus?

3.63. IA responded by saying that he would ask the question at the next Premier League Shareholders' Meeting. It is not a case that the Premier League simply sells to the highest bidder; they have a strategy to sell the rights that makes the best fit with availability and profitability. For example, the recent six-year deal with the broadcaster in China involves most of the games being available free to air. This means that the Premier League did not achieve the best revenue, but it does achieve maximum viewing figures.

4. Any other business:

4.1. PA said that it was confirmed at the Equality and Diversity Meeting on 12/04 that the responsibility for Disability Liaison Officer had been split across several roles in the Club. However, disabled supporters have advised that the ruling requires that a designated person must be appointed.

4.2. AP responded by saying the Club has appointed a new Disability Liaison Officer who will be in post by the end of May.

4.3. MS asked what was the Club's policy on attending funerals of former players. It is alleged that the Club did not send a representative to the funeral of Gerry Byrne.

4.4. IA responded by saying that a former player attended on behalf of the Club, and that it was a Club policy to ensure that someone attends on behalf of the Club. The Club makes a point of liaising with the family of the deceased and offers support where it can. IA confirmed that he would provide the name of who attended the funeral of Gerry Byrne on behalf of the Club.

4.5. IB asked that the minutes recorded the excellent work SB and her team did in supporting the food bank initiative.

4.6. SB confirmed that the review of fan engagement was underway and that additional information would be provided in the next couple of weeks as to the next steps.

**5. Key actions from this meeting:**



- 5.1. Club to provide a breakdown of ticket allocations for the new Main Stand. [3.8]
- 5.2. Club to issue a communiqué in order to manage fans' expectations on any guarantees of cup final tickets. [3.14]
- 5.3. Club to report back to the Committee once it has calculated the likely affect on its budget for discounting season tickets for those who turn 65 part-way through a season. [3.18]
- 5.4. Club to consider status of members who attend all 19 home games within the membership scheme review. [3.22]
- 5.5. Committee to identify most appropriate online system for recording and tracking actions. [3.25]
- 5.6. Club to circulate minutes, and actions, from any future ad hoc meetings with representatives of the Committee as soon as administratively possible thereafter. [3.27]
- 5.7. Club to circulate the presentation referred to in 3.26 above to the Committee. [3.27]
- 5.8. Club to circulate the report from the school that attended the hospitality event to the Committee. [3.29]
- 5.9. Club to address half-time activities at the annual conference between the Club and its sponsors, with perhaps one or two of the Committee in attendance. [3.32]
- 5.10. Committee to forward specific queries or concerns regarding the new contracts for the Centenary Stand. [3.45]
- 5.11. Club to confirm the exact processes involved in preparing and displaying halal and vegetarian food. [3.47]
- 5.12. Club to send a representative from the catering department to the next premeeting of the Committee. [3.48]
- 5.13. Club to move forward the idea of a group of disabled fans taking part in a televised debate coving fan experience. [3.49]
- 5.14. Committee to forward all requests concerning Liverpool Pride to the Club for consideration. [3.59]
- 5.15. Club to confirm who attended the funeral of Gerry Byrne. [4.4]
- 5.16. Club to provide information on the next steps in the formal review of fan engagement that is now underway. [4.6]